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# Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste

## Comment Sheet

EIS000063

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Comments: (If possible, please reference section number and/or page number in document if applicable.)

- see attached article from Snake River Alliance  
newsletter -

\*note - submitted at Boise Hearing - evening session  
10/15/99

Please note: For your comment(s) to be considered in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, your comment(s) need to be received by the Department of Energy by February 9, 2000. To the extent practicable the Department will consider comments received after February 9.

Please feel free to attach additional pages; more postage may be needed. If you prefer to mail your comments, you may use the back side of this sheet as a postage-paid, self-mailer. To do so, fold in thirds along the dotted line so address and postage-paid notice are visible; then secure with tape.

# THE DIRT ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN

Spent fuel is nasty stuff. A person standing 3 feet from an unshielded fuel assembly can receive a lethal dose of radiation in three minutes. One such assembly (about the diameter of a pencil) has about as much radioactivity as all the waste INEEL could possibly hope to send to New Mexico over the next several years. Currently, only Idaho and South Carolina are receiving spent fuel for storage. One single shipment of nuclear navy spent fuel contains roughly 6 times the radioactivity of *all* the transuranic waste that might go to New Mexico over the next 20 years. Since the 1995 deal was struck between the State of Idaho, DOE, and the nuclear navy, Idaho has received about 180 such shipments, and will receive approximately 950 more over the next 35 years.

Enter Nevada and the proposed Yucca Mountain repository for commercial and defense-generated spent fuel and high-level waste. If Yucca opens in 2010 and begins receiving shipments, Nevada would receive between 35,000 and 100,000 shipments in a 25-year period. For those shipments to reach Nevada, the most dangerous form of nuclear waste would pass through 43 states (including Idaho) and past 109 cities with populations of 100,000 or more, including Boise. According to the DOE's own estimate, between 70 and 310 trans-

portation accidents can be expected during this time. Release of a small fraction of a shipping cask's contents would be sufficient to contaminate a 42-square mile area and cost over \$620 million to clean up. Several of those accidents could occur in Idaho.

In addition to transportation problems, Yucca Mountain itself is flawed by likely groundwater intrusion and its proximity to major earthquake faults. 80% of Nevadans oppose this repository and it is time to stop trying to force them to change their minds. Instead, the DOE should continue to move its spent fuel into on-site dry cask facilities. This would ~~eliminate~~ <sup>reduce</sup> the need for transportation and prevent potential catastrophic accidents.

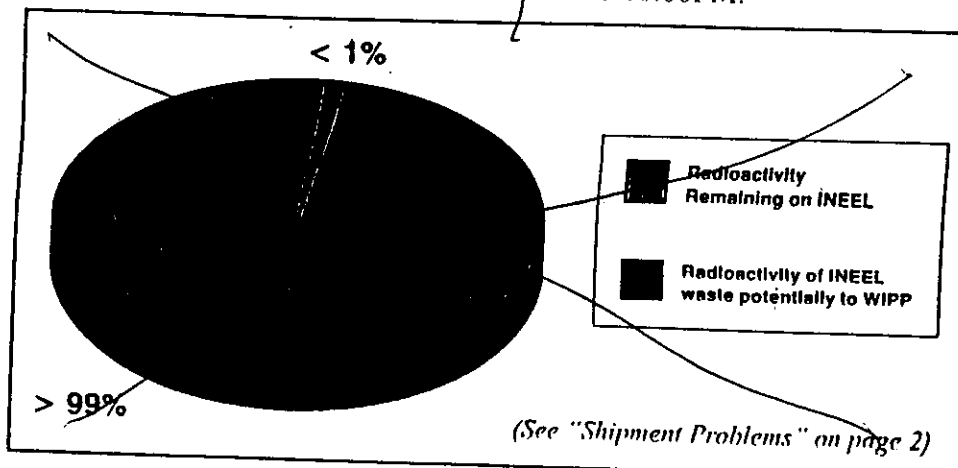
If Yucca should open, Idaho's spent fuel problems would not end. Indeed, instead of an end to spent fuel shipments, shipments to Idaho might increase. Due to a provision in the State's agreement with the DOE and the nuclear navy, the existence of a

repository would be one condition removing the limit on shipments to Idaho. The Alliance is deeply concerned INEEL would become a treatment and testing facility for untold amounts of spent fuel.

There is also the issue of fairness. The draft EIS on Yucca Mountain has been released for public comment, and Yucca is the *only* place being evaluated for permanent storage of this lethal trash. Normally, an EIS must analyze a range of alternatives, but not so in this case. Nevada houses none of the waste planned for the repository, and 90% of the spent fuel would come from commercial power plants east of the Mississippi River.

It is time once again to tell the Department of Energy to Stop the Shipments, and perhaps the feds will finally begin to listen. A hearing on

Yucca Mountain will be held On October 5<sup>th</sup> at the Grove Hotel in Boise, from 10:00AM to 1:00PM and from 6:00 to 10:00PM.



The Newsletter is published periodically by the Snake River Alliance, 1674 Hill Road, Suite 2, Boise, Idaho 83702.